

Dice of Destiny

by Jackson Gregory

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"HELD FOR RANSOM."

Synopsis—Senor Antonio de la Guerra, a fine old Spaniard living on his ancestral estate on the American side of the Mexican border, is informed by his American lawyer, Dempston, that there is a technical error in his will. He thereupon signs a new will, without reading it. In the meantime his adorable granddaughter and heiress, Senora Teresa, is out on her rose-covered balcony, listening to American love-making from Billy Stanway, owner of the Painted Rock ranch. Teresa, going to join her grandfather, finds him gone, with the drawing room in disorder and blood on the floor. The American takes command of the situation and arms the de la Guerra ranch hands. Senor Eduardo Ramon Torre, a hated kinsman of the de la Guerra, appears, says he encountered Mexican bandits riding south and shows a scratch which might have been made by a bullet. Stanway and his men return unsuccessful from the pursuit.

CHAPTER IV—Continued.

He ran through it hastily, skimming the lines, eager for the gist of it. And when he had found it he leaped to his feet, his hands clenched, amazement and anger mingled in his eyes. "It is a forgery!" he cried sharply.

"No," shaking her head, "it is his signature. And look, to make certain I investigated. Pedro and Juana and Vidal witnessed the signature. That is what brought Mr. Dempston last night."

"But," he muttered heavily, "the thing is impossible! Why, he has given everything, everything to Torre! And he hated Torre more than he pretended to hate an American!"

"Yet it is his will," she reminded him. "And he is gone. And Senor Torre is here."

"Already with the air of a master!" shouted Stanway. He was already half across the room, sheer wrath in his eyes now, the will crumpled in his hand.

"Wait!" the girl cried, running to him, her hand upon his arm as though she would hold him back. "What are you going to do?"

"To tell him that he is no less a fool than a thief," he retorted. "That he must explain his opportune presence here as well as the disappearance of De la Guerra."

"Again I appear to eavesdrop. Again I prove the adage that he who listens hears disappointing things of himself." It was Torre leaning indolently in the doorway.

"You are going to say, senor—" Stanway flung the crumpled paper in front of him.

"Explain that!" he snapped. "You can't get away with a thing like this, Torre. Explain it!"

"When I have read it," replied Torre coolly, his small hand carelessly taking up the document. "Ah—" with what sounded like very genuine surprise in his tone—"it is De la Guerra's will!"

Teresa and Stanway watched him closely.

"It seems very clear," he said then, his eyes smiling. He folded the paper carefully and thrust it into his pocket. "Where is the need for explanation?"

"The will was made last night," said Stanway crisply. "The ink of the signatures was hardly dry when he disappeared. What is the connection of the two events, senor?"

"You ask riddles, senor," Torre shrugged his shoulders.

A servant in snowy white linen livery appeared in the dining room doorway.

"El Capitan Juarez to speak with the senorita," he announced.

Stanway started, swinging about, forgetting Torre for the instant.

"Of the rebel army?" he demanded. "El, senor! Of the insurgents?"

"I can guess his errand," remarked Torre indifferently. "He will no doubt wish to speak with me. Tell him, muchacho, that as the De la Guerra heir I shall speak with him—when I have finished my coffee. A little more sugar, Pedro."

CHAPTER V.

The Game Begins.

Teresa de la Guerra's face went red and white, and Torre, seeing, smiled. She heard in the words only an insult to her beloved papa grande, knowing as she so well knew that of all men the old Spaniard hated his arrogant young kinsman most implacably. "We don't understand," she said presently, turning her back upon the man at table and addressing Stanway. "Perhaps Captain Juarez' call will clear matters for us. Will you come with me, Senor Stanway?"

Torre's face darkened as he watched them go out together.

In the drawing room, in much worn uniform bespeaking his rank, a very

broad, heavy-set Mexican, swarthy, hard-featured, keen-eyed, was waiting. He bowed deeply as they entered.

"Senorita," he said briskly, his eyes disregarding Stanway and resting upon the girl's face in a keen regard. "It is an unpleasant duty which brings me here this morning."

"Be seated," she said quietly, going to a chair. "But first, Captain Juarez, this is my friend, Senor Stanway of the Painted Rock rancho."

The two men bowed coolly. Stanway remained standing near the girl's chair, while Juarez sat down.

"We of poor Mexico," said the captain shortly, "are fighting hard for a dear cause. We sacrifice ourselves, our hopes, our homes for the thing we love most, senorita."

"And that is our country. We do things which we do not like to do simply because it is our duty to take any opportunity which chance gives us to free the neck of our land from the foot of the tyrant."

Teresa bowed.

"And you have called this morning; you have crossed the border—" "At the behest of a Mexican's duty. Senorita, your grandfather is well and sends his love to you."

"Tell me," she cried impetuously, "where is he?"

"Many miles beyond the border," he answered succinctly. "In the hands of friends—if he accedes to our demands," significantly.

"And those demands?" curiously.

"I have not as yet made of him," returned the captain. "Allow me to explain, senorita. I know Senor de la Guerra, if not personally at least very well by repute. I know that he does not love my Mexico, and that he is very stubborn."

"Our cause needs money and he has it in great, unnecessary quantities."

"Had I made a demand upon him for a note to you, stating that he was held for ransom and urging you to pay it, I know that he would have refused. So I come straight to you, without so much as a word to him, informing you that unless the money is sent immediately—"

He broke off, shrugging his shoulders.

"You realize, senor," broke in Stanway coolly, "that this is rather an unusual sort of thing at this day? That it is not without danger to you? If the senorita were not disposed to give what you ask, if on the other hand we held you for the crime you have committed—"

Again the captain shrugged.

"It would mean imprisonment for me, or perhaps death," he answered promptly. "Things which a soldier faces every day of his life and grows to think nothing about. And—pardon me, senorita—it would mean the death of the Senor de la Guerra."

Again a little shiver trembled through the frame of the girl. Stanway, his eyes steady upon the Mexican's, was silent a moment. Finally he said, turning to Teresa:

"Before you give this gentleman his answer, senorita, may I ask for a few words with you?"

"May I interrupt again?" It was Eduardo Ramon Torre, insolent and debonaire, bowing in the doorway, a fresh, unlighted cigarette between his fingers. "Buenos dias, Senor el Capitan."

Captain Juarez stared at him fixedly, his hard eyes as insolent as those of Torre, and made no answer.

"I think, senor," went on Torre in mock courtesy, still lounging in the doorway, "that it is with me that you wish to deal. Am I not right, prima mfa?" lightly to Teresa.

The girl's eyes darkened. Juarez looked from one to another curiously.

"I think," he said slowly, "that I can have business with no one except la senorita. She is the one to speak in a case like this one, since the old senor is not here to speak for himself and she is his heiress."

"Let your keen eyes rest on this," Torre drew the will from his pocket and carelessly tossed it into Juarez' lap.

The Mexican looked at it swiftly, his eye ran down the written sheet, and he started palpably when his glance rested upon the name Eduardo Ramon Torre.

"I have been misinformed," he cried, starting to his feet. "The senorita is not the heiress. It is Senor Torre who inherits!"

"Seguro," replied Torre, putting out his shapely hand for the will. "And I, senor, am that Senor Torre. Now, what do you want?"

"This is true, senorita?" Juarez whirled about, his eyes bright and hard upon Teresa's.

"You come from papa grande," she answered him guardedly. "Did he not tell you of a change in his will?"

"We did not speak," Juarez reminded

ed her. "As I have said, I knew that it would be useless to talk with him. He knows only that he is being held; he does not know why. I know only," and he resorted to the shrug so much a part of his method of speech, "that rumor has it that you are his heiress, and this paper states that Torre inherits."

"Rumor at times is misinformed," Torre said smilingly. "You have the will and testament itself before you. If it is sufficiently plain that I and not the senorita," with an apologetic bow to Teresa, "represent my kinsman; I trust that you will state your errand concisely."

"It is this," said Juarez shortly. "El Senor de la Guerra is held by my men for ransom. Twenty thousand dollars will bring him back to you promptly, without a scratch on him. A refusal to pay will be a signal for his death."

"So," remarked Torre coolly. "It is only twenty thousand dollars. You are modest, senor!"

"American money," Juarez added as coolly.

"American money," nodded Torre. "That is better than Mexican pesos, at any rate. It is at least less insulting to my kinsman."

Captain Juarez made no reply. Teresa and Stanway looked at each other swiftly.

Torre, smiling as though the whole matter were merely amusing, addressed himself to the girl.

"Teresa," and she flushed under the easy familiarity, "perhaps the valiant captain has not yet breakfasted. He has a long ride before him and it would be better if he should not carry away a misunderstanding of the De la Guerra hospitality. Also, while he has his coffee, you and I might discuss the situation."

"Yes," the girl agreed slowly. "That would perhaps be best." Her hand went to the bell cord to summon Pedro.

"We have just breakfasted, senor capitan. If you will go with Pedro he will see that you are served. And Senor Torre, Senor Stanway and myself can avail ourselves of the time to come to a decision."

The captain bowed, and with no hesitation turned his back on them to follow the servant to the dining room. Torre came in, sat down, crossing his legs with elaborate care to the crease in his trousers, and favored Stanway with a look which mocked openly.

"An interesting situation, is it not, senor?" he asked lightly.

"An extremely hazardous game you are playing, Torre," cried Stanway angrily.

"If" Torre lifted his brows. "It is not I who play. It is I who watch the game."

"Watch the pawns your own hand has set moving!" was Stanway's heated retort. "Do you think that you can get away with a thing of this kind, Torre? Why, man, it smells to heaven!"

"Recriminations aside—at least shall we postpone them? There is a crisis demanding attention. Now," lifting his hand against Stanway's words, "I have a proposition to make—to you, Teresa."

"What is it?" she asked coldly.

"Merely this: As heir to the De la Guerra estate I may be a prejudiced person. You, with no personal interest, and a quick light flicked in his eyes at the girl's wincing at his words, "are the one to decide. Shall the captain's request be granted? I leave it to you, senorita. Entirely to you."

Teresa bit her lip, the color surging angrily into her cheeks. She saw the trap as plainly as did Torre, as plainly as Stanway saw it. And she did not see the answer to make.

"It is perhaps not impossible," went on Torre evenly, "that a large part of the sum mentioned is now on the premises. We all know that my kinsman has always been his own banker; that he at all times has been able to produce a large amount of gold at a moment's notice."

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JAPS ADMIT FLOGGING OFFENDERS IN KOREA

Assert Natives Often Prefer Sound Thashing to Payment of Fine.

Japanese officials in Korea, in discussing the punishment administered to Koreans in the independence movement there, say that the old Korean custom of flogging has been continued by the Japanese authorities.

One reason given by the Japanese for this was that the prisons were insufficient to lodge the large number of prisoners arrested in the revolutionary movement. The Japanese officials also declare that the Koreans, themselves, sometimes preferred flogging to paying a fine.

Foreign newspapers have published statements from foreigners in Korea alleging that several Korean men who were flogged in pursuance of court sentences were afterward in serious physical condition. Mention was particularly made of five men who had entered a local hospital at Seoul, who had received for three consecutive days 30 blows each. It is declared that the flesh was terribly swollen and discolored and that gangrene had set in.

One of the officials showed the correspondent the instrument with which flogging is done under the orders of the court. It consists of two slender pieces of wood tightly bound with hemp twine.

The convicted person is tied to a wooden bench, which is built something in the form of a cross.

AMERICAN HEIRESS IS NOW POVERTY STRICKEN



Countess Colored-Mannfield, formerly the beautiful Nora Iselin of New York, before she married into Teuton royalty, is now one of the number of American heiresses who are living on borrowed money or on sums ridiculously small compared with their former grandeur. The financial chaos in Germany and the seizure of their wealth in this country by the alien property custodian has left them practically penniless.

HAS LIVED A CENTURY

But "Aunt Dude" Goodall Works in Her Garden.

"Aunt Dude" Goodall celebrated the one hundred and first anniversary of her birth at Marion, Ill., recently. Mrs. Goodall was born the year Illinois was admitted to the Union, and has lived all her life in that state.

She is in excellent health for a person of her age, and works practically daily in her garden and with her chickens.

Mrs. Goodall was born in Saline county. Her maiden name was Meredith. Her husband has been dead for 20 years. She was the mother of 11 children, three of whom are still living. Mrs. John Charida, Mrs. D. L. Thompson and Mrs. George Pulley.

On her one hundredth anniversary, held last year, the entire city and surrounding community turned out to do her honor. The celebration took place at the large Williamson county fair grounds, which was crowded all day with visitors. This year the family gathered at the home for a dinner.

Finder Substitutes Glass.

The loss of her diamond ring was discovered by Mrs. Theodore Tucker of St. Louis while she was in an up town building. A man aided in the search. He pretended to pick up a diamond. "Here it is," he said. Mrs. Tucker thanked him and gave him \$5. A jeweler said the diamond was glass. The lost stone has not been found.

RATIO MAKES FOR HARMONY

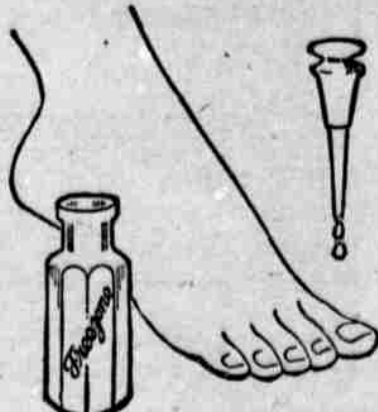
Peculiar Arrangement of Chinese Musical Instruments Said to Be Work of Chinese Emperor.

The characteristic musical instrument of the Chinese is a series of bamboo tubes, the longest of which measures about nine inches, and of which the remainder diminish in length at a regular ratio, each being just two-thirds the length of the one before. This arrangement was devised by the Chinese—they say, by the Emperor Huang-Ti—on the following principle: Between heaven and earth there is perfect harmony. Now, the number three is the emblem of heaven and two of earth. If then two pipes or tubes be made in the proportion of three to two, they will harmonize in tone as perfectly as earth and heaven. So the base tube of the instrument was made nine inches long and the second two-thirds that length, or six inches. Of course, the third has to be two-thirds the length of the second, or four inches; and so on. The result was that the note of the second tube was what we call an interval of a fifth above that of the first, that of the third a fifth above the second, and so on through the whole range.

Crowd at Leipzig Fair. Attendance at the Leipzig (Germany) spring fair totaled 100,000, making a new record.

Lift off Corns!

Doesn't hurt a bit and Freezone costs only a few cents.



With your fingers! You can lift off any hard corn, soft corn, or corn between the toes, and the hard skin calluses from bottom of feet.

A tiny bottle of "Freezone" costs little at any drug store; apply a few drops upon the corn or callus. Instantly it stops hurting, then shortly you lift that bothersome corn or callus right off, root and all, without one bit of pain or soreness. Truly! No humbug!—Adv.

When the last hypocrite dies his satanic majesty will not have a faithful servant on earth.

What is Castoria

CASTORIA is a harmless substitute for Castor Oil, Paregoric, Drops and Soothing Syrups. It is pleasant. It contains neither Opium, Morphine nor other Narcotic substance. Its age is its guarantee. For more than thirty years it has been in constant use for the relief of Constipation, Flatulency, Wind Colic and Diarrhoea; allaying Feverishness arising therefrom, and by regulating the Stomach and Bowels, aids the assimilation of Food; giving healthy and natural sleep. The Children's Panacea—The Mother's Friend.

The Kind You Have Always Bought, and which has been in use for over 30 years, has borne the signature of Chas. H. Fletcher, and has been made under his personal supervision since its infancy. Allow no one to deceive you in this. All Counterfeits, Imitations and "Just-as-Good" are but Experiments that trifle with and endanger the health of Infants and Children—Experience against Experiment. Genuine Castoria always bears the signature of *Chas. H. Fletcher*

Hard on White Waists.

The coal mine labor troubles now fomenting all over the world led Samuel Gompers to say at a Pittsburgh dinner:

"Nobody would deny justice to the coal miner, for what life is so laborious, risksome and dirty as his?"

"I heard a story the other day about a Pennsylvania woman who complained because her cook put seven white shirt waists in the wash every week."

"Why, Emma," the woman said, "my own daughter doesn't dream of putting seven shirt waists a week in the wash!"

"Maybe she don't, ma'am," said Emma, "and maybe she ain't engaged, neither, to a coal miner what insists on hard spoonin' every blessed night."

Japan's Isinglass Production.

While "kanten" or isinglass, made from seaweed, is produced in practically every part of Japan where climatic conditions are favorable, the prefectures of Osaka, Kyoto and Hyogo, are said to produce more than two-thirds of the entire production of isinglass in Japan, which was about 2,800,207 pounds, valued at \$977,492, in 1917.

The Way of It.

"In the passage of the fleet through the Panama canal they had to key expectation up, didn't they?"

"I suppose they did to negotiate the locks."

A young widow hasn't much use for a man who attempts to kiss her and falls.

Sometimes a blond woman is really a blond.

Money Made Selling Sumac.

Sumac, which grows abundantly in certain sections of the United States, may be gathered and sold profitably to tanners and dye manufacturers, say the specialists of the bureau of chemistry, United States department of agriculture. The price of sumac has increased in recent years because of the decrease in importations of this plant from Sicily. The American sumac, if properly gathered and cured, is equal to the imported article.

In certain sections of Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia good wages can be made, the department says, by gathering and selling sumac during July, August and September. Arrangements for the sale of the sumac should be made before it is gathered.

Glad to Use Old Houses.

As a result of the house shortage in Philadelphia, fashionable five-story houses, each with from thirteen to seventeen rooms, numerous baths and all the modern improvements of 50 years ago, which have been idle for 15 years because foreigners inundated the district, have been let to combinations of ordinary tenants.

For Sale, One Obelisk.

The obelisk at Oldbrick, near Grog-hed, which was erected in 1736 to mark the spot where King William's troops crossed the river at the battle of the Boyne, is for sale.

The more a man doesn't know the less he doubts.

It takes a woman to conceal what she does not know.

25 Cents

Will buy
a Big Package of

POSTUM CEREAL

weighing over a
pound, net.

What are you paying
for coffee?